

# ABSTRACTS FOR THE 45<sup>th</sup> ICTM WORLD CONFERENCE

BANGKOK, 11–17 JULY 2019

THURSDAY, 11 JULY 2019

## IA KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**Jareernchai Chonpairot** (Mahasarakham University). Transborder Theories and Paradigms in Ethnomusicological Studies of Folk Music: Visions for *Mo Lam* in Mainland Southeast Asia

This talk explores the nature and identity of traditional music, principally *khaen* music and *lam* performing arts in northeastern Thailand (Isan) and Laos. *Mo lam* refers to an expert of *lam* singing who is routinely accompanied by a *mo khaen*, a skilled player of the bamboo panpipe.

During 1972 and 1973, Dr. Chonpairot conducted field studies on *Mo lam* in northeast Thailand and Laos with Dr. Terry E. Miller. For many generations, Laotian and Thai villagers have crossed the national border constituted by the Mekong River to visit relatives and to participate in regular festivals. However, Chonpairot and Miller's fieldwork took place during the final stages of the Vietnam War which had begun more than a decade earlier. During their fieldwork they collected cassette recordings of *lam* singing from Laotian radio stations in Vientiane and Savannakhet. Chonpairot also conducted fieldwork among Laotian artists living in Thai refugee camps. After the Vietnam War ended, many more Laotians who had worked for the Americans fled to Thai refugee camps. Chonpairot delineated *Mo lam* regional melodies coupled to specific identities in each locality of the music's origin. He chose *Lam Khon Savan* from southern Laos for his dissertation topic, and also collected data from senior Laotian *mo lam* tradition-bearers then resident in the United States and France. These became his main informants.

Since 1990, Chonpairot has worked with ten doctoral students to continue collecting music and related materials from northern, central, and southern Laos. The students have written their dissertations about this music, and as the collection grew, so the group's findings led to further investigations about cultural roots and origins. Chonpairot's fieldwork is remembered as one of the very first scholarly projects of its types in Laos,

1950 is often divided into before reform and opening up and after reform and opening up, with 1978 as the boundary. Corresponding to the latter economic development narrative is cultural “openness.” The previous nearly 30 years have been described as a more closed period, apart from communication with socialist countries. But does this traditional/modern binary logic really exist in the development of music in China? Is the music landscape of China in the 1950s and 1970s simply equivalent to “socialist”? The meaning of “AAL music” (music of Asia, Africa and Latin America) should not be ignored. In the 1950s and 1970s, there were a large number of performing groups and artists from “third world” countries who performed in China. China also studied the programs and organized return visits. Later, in 1962, the Oriental Song and Dance Company was established with the main purpose of learning and performing “AAL music.” Through field investigation of the related personnel of the Oriental Song and Dance Troupe, the practice of “AAL music” can be restored to a certain extent, studying and performing traditional dances from India, Burma, Indonesia, etc. The practice of a China independent from visiting foreign communities constitutes an alternative view of modernity, since it is in the 20th century. The 1950s–1970s witnessed the removal of western art music besides foreign music in an important way, while in the 1980s, in the first decade of the reform and open policy, the influx of music from Hong Kong and Taiwan, and European and American pop music together formed the landscape of China for “world music.” In practice, this was different from European and American “world music” performance, which focused on preserving cultural contexts, and rather adopted the characteristics of transplanting and adapting traditional Chinese musical instruments to play it, which provided a valuable example for us to understand the diversified connotation of “world music.”

**Connie Lim Keh Nie** (University Malaysia Sarawak). Expressing the Virtue of Bravery in Iban Popular Songs in 1950s–1960s Sarawak

Sarawak in the 1950s utilized Iban soldiers who fought for the nation but also carried their pre-colonial cultural legacy of bravery (*berani*). This *berani* attribute associated with headhunting inspired Iban singers in Sarawak to write songs commemorating their achievements during the Malayan Emergency (1948–1960). Iban are the largest indigenous ethnic group in Sarawak, and since the establishment of Iban radio broadcasting in the 1950s under Radio Sarawak, they have experienced shifting focal points largely fixated on modernity. However, Iban broadcasts not only served to disseminate information about the new nation, but also to emphasize “the

importance of Iban language” and to preserve the uniqueness of “reinvented cultural heritage” (Postill 2008, 214). Indeed the emergence of the radio station broadened Iban exposure to, and ability to adapt and assimilate, popular music styles. In this paper I argue that at the same time Iban acquired popular music skills, they also used music as a medium to portray Iban cultural identity and ethnicity within the larger nation state where Malay and Western cultures dominated. Iban popular songs created in the 1950s and 1960s were associated with the virtue of bravery praising modern heroes. The pre-colonial Iban cultural qualities of bravery (*berani*) and boldness (*kempang*) differentiated these soldiers from others in the new nation. *Berani* as a song anthem resurfaced in the modern Sarawak armed forces and modern-day Sarawak military soldiers took pride in having pre-colonial roots in Iban warrior culture. Seen through the lens of “alternative conceptions of modernity” (Barendregt 2014), this paper analyzes song lyrics that are associated with the virtue of bravery and the dynamics and movements of Iban people. Through semi-structured interviews with artists from the period, this paper interrogates the cultural factors that contributed to the creation of the songs. The analysis pays close attention to meanings imbedded in the lyrics and how these songs portray the virtue of bravery.

**Hsin-Wen Hsu** (National Taiwan Normal University). Everyday Modernity and Embodied Ethnicity: The Mediation of Taiwanese Hakka Vinyl Records

In recent years, historical recordings have gradually become an analytical focus in studies of popular music. Scholars have explored individual musicians’ discographies and their composition or performance styles in historical recordings. They have also analyzed the production and circulation activities of major record companies. However, few have analyzed the material and social bases on which these historical recordings were consumed. There is still much room for analysis of the technical and theoretical messages that historical recordings convey. Informed by theorists such as Marshall McLuhan (1967), Georgina Born (2005), and Shunya Yoshimi (2013 [1995]), this paper aims to contribute to existing scholarship with a case study on the mediation of Taiwanese Hakka vinyl records, which emerged in the 1910s but became prevalent across Hakka communities during the 1960s and 1970s. Based on data collected from my ethnographic research of Taiwanese Hakka vinyl records released by labels such as Nippon Columbia, Meilou, Far East, and Ring Ring, I argue vinyl records are worth attention because they are influential intermediaries in social life and mediated particular forms of social awareness; the changing